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ABSTRACT

During the summer of 2001, the Wake County Public School System, North Carolina, conducted a Summer Academy for students in grades 3 through 8 scoring at Level 1 or Level 2 in the state's achievement testing program, the End-of-Grade tests. An evaluation explored how the schools implemented the Summer Academy program and the impact on students. Data were gathered from student achievement reports and school district documents. In all, 3,043 students attended Summer Academy, roughly 70% of those eligible. The per pupil expenditure was just over $842. Most of the students who attended the Summer Academy still scored below Level III on the tests administered at the end of the program, and only 29% of students who received a Level I or II score on the regular administration were able to earn a passing score at the end of the Summer Academy. Several reasons are offered for the low success rate. These reasons center on the significant deficits in learning of program students and the relatively short period in which the Summer Academy operated, only about 15 days. An appendix contains principals' responses to the survey questionnaire. (SLD)

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Summer Academy in the Wake County Public Schools: An Evaluation of the 2001 Program

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SUMMER ACADEMY IN THE WAKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS: AN EVALUATION OF THE 2001 PROGRAM

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Individuals learn at different rates. While some students learn a given concept quickly, others may require more time to develop mastery and understanding. This is a primary reason for the development of extended learning opportunities, whether these be after-school tutorials, Saturday schools, intersessions in year-round schools, or other similar strategies. One strategy school districts have traditionally provided for high school students is summer school. During the summer, students are able to catch up by completing a course they need to graduate, raising a poor grade, or taking a course that their schedule might not otherwise allow. Recently, however, more and more North Carolina districts have been providing summer opportunities for elementary and middle school students, reflecting a trend of similar well-publicized initiatives around the country (e.g., Chicago and New York City).

It is widely believed that the enactment of the North Carolina State Board of Education's promotion/intervention policy mandates summer learning opportunities, at least for some students in selected grades. The State Board's policy requires that districts provide remedial opportunities for students in Grades 3, 5, and 8 who do not score at or above grade level standards on End of Grade tests in reading and mathematics. One of the strategies mentioned in the policy is summer school. However, the policy does not appear to mandate any specific strategy. Therefore, districts are free to create a menu of remedial activities aimed at helping students attain the appropriate standard of learning as a condition of grade promotion.

In the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS), the State Board's policy is consistent with the district's goal of having 95% of students performing at or above grade level. To reach that goal, the district has already implemented an Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) that has provided after-school, intersession, and Saturday school opportunities for some students. During the summer of 2001, a Summer Academy was also conducted for students scoring at Level I or II in Grades 3-8. This report will describe that Summer Academy and will discuss its results. There was also a summer school for high school students, but this report will focus only on the Summer Academy for elementary and middle school students.

Summer Programs in Other Districts

It may provide some context for this evaluation to examine how summer learning opportunities are provided by other school districts similar to WCPSS. In order to extend understanding of summer schools, the summer programs of seven other districts were studied. These districts ranged from California to Maryland, from Illinois to Florida. Several of the districts participate in the Educational Benchmarking Network, of which Wake County Public School system is a founding member. In other cases, districts were identified by searching the research and evaluation literature. In the case of the EBN districts, an

official of the school district who was involved with their summer activities was interviewed and, in some cases, evaluation reports that had been prepared were studied. In the other cases (Santa Barbara, California; Evanston, Illinois; and Chicago, Illinois), evaluation reports presented at a national conference of education researchers were used as the primary data source.

Table 1 provides an overview of how the various districts implemented their summer schools. Specific attention is paid to several important elements of each program. With two exceptions, the summer programs studied were intended to provide remediation for students who had not made sufficient progress during the school year. However, in most cases, attendance at summer school was *not* required. Most programs offered classes beginning at grades 3 or 4, and the academic attention tended to be limited to reading and/or mathematics. Moreover, the majority of programs attempted to help students learn the specific skills or competencies that they had not mastered in the *prior* year. An interesting exception to this generalization is provided by Anne Arundel County, where the emphasis is on developing problem-solving skills in mathematics and reading comprehension strategies. Presumably, these skills act as a kind of preview of the skills that students will be required to deploy in the following year.

Most of these programs operate for a minimum of 20 days, with a ceiling of 30 days in Chicago. (The 35-day period applies only to Chicago's high school courses). It should be noted however, that none of the programs operated for a full day. Rather, the instructional day was shortened to about 3 or 4 hours. WCPSS is on the low-end of this scale in terms of the number of days of instruction. Indeed, three days in WCPSS were dedicated to testing, and two additional days for teacher preparation, so that the instructional days in Wake County were actually *fewer* than shown in the chart.

With one exception, no district provided particular incentives for teachers in these programs. The exception is interesting. Managers of the Evanston, Illinois, program indicate in their evaluation report that, during the prior summer school, they examined the quality of experience of the teachers hired and it was found that at least some of these teachers did not have the necessary certification or experience to suggest that they would be successful at teaching students in summer school. Therefore, Evanston decided to offer a salary supplement to enable them to target experienced teachers who were more likely to be successful with students who needed remedial help.

While some districts chose to consolidate summer school on a few campuses, other districts allowed each school to implement its own program. In WCPSS, schools were given the choice of either providing their own program or consolidating with neighboring schools to provide a summer academy and, indeed, several schools exercised this option. (Table 2 displays the school sites in WCPSS where summer academies were held.) It should be noted that none of the middle schools chose to combine their program with other schools, presumably because each school had a large enough population of eligible students to support an efficient program. A major reason advanced for not consolidating sites is that students already know the school (since they attend there in the regular year) and so there is no time lost in adjustment. Many districts do not appear to subscribe to this reasoning.

The column in Table 1 labeled "control" indicates that, again, there was a mix of decisions about where the summer school should be controlled. The indication "central" implies that the district's central office was responsible for planning and implementing the summer school. A high degree of centralization of student eligibility, curricular offerings, and programming was maintained in these districts. By contrast, other districts preferred to delegate large amounts of control to the local school that would be implementing the program. One official interviewed indicated that this, in effect, meant that there were as many summer programs as there were schools.

Only two districts charged tuition for summer school below the high school level. In these cases, summer school was not required, although students were encouraged to take summer courses, if appropriate, and scholarships were available for some students. In Fulton County, GA, tuition was remitted for students whose test scores fell below a given level, as an incentive to participate in summer school. Further, students at various income levels were allowed to participate in summer school at no charge if their scores fell below specified cut scores on standardized tests. In Anne Arundel County, principals were able to award scholarships for students in their schools who, in the principal's view, might benefit from summer school but who could not afford the tuition or would be unwilling to pay it. Finally, Anne Arundel County does not provide free transportation for students to attend summer school.

Table 1

Comparison of Selected Aspects of Summer School in Various School Districts

School System	Purpose	Duration	Grades	Compulsory ?	Courses	Instructional Emphasis	Cnslidted Sites?	Tchr Incentive	Control	Tuition
Santa Barbara, CA	Enrichment	25 days	3&4	No	Math, Sci	Dist Standards	Yes	No	Local	No
Fulton County, GA	Remediation	20 days	1-12	No	R&M	Dist Standards	No	No	Central	Yes
Chicago, IL	Remediation	30/35 dy	3, 6, 8	Yes	R&M	Dist Standards	?	No	Central	No
Evanston, IL	Remediation	30 days	K-8	Yes	R&M	Dist Standards	?	Yes	Central	No
Orange County, FL	Remediation	25 days	3-12	No	Full Spectrum	State Curriculum	No	No	Local	No
Jefferson County, KY	Enrichment	22 days	4,6,9	No	Reading	Dist Standards	Yes	No	Central	No
Anne Arundel County, MD	Remediation	20 days	K-5	No	R&M	ProbSolv/Comp	Yes	No	Local	Yes
Durham County, NC	Remediation	20 days	3, 5, 8	Yes	R&M	State Curriculum	Yes	No	Central	No
Wake County, NC	**Remediation**	**15 days**	**3--8**	**Yes**	**R&M**	**State Curriculum**	**Option**	**No**	**Local**	**No**

NOTES:

1. Only Anne Arundel County & Fulton County charge tuition. Tuition is remitted for needy students and scholarships are available.
2. Only Evanston provides a salary incentive to attract highly skilled teachers.
3. All programs provide some time for planning/staff development.
4. Most programs have instructional "days" of 3 to 4 hours.
5. Most districts cite transportation as a major cost. Only Anne Arundel does not provide transportation.

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Table 2			
Summer School Sites & Attendance			
Elementary Schools	**Students**	**Elementary Schools (cont)**	**Students**
Apex Elem (Grades 4 and 5)	15	Weatherstone w/ Green Hope	8
Aversboro	49	Wendell	30
Baileywick	16	Willow Springs	28
Brassfield	5	York w/Stough	39
Briarcliff	23	Zebulon	45
Brooks	28		
Bugg	13		
Carver	24		
Cary	48		
Conn	49	**Middle Schools**	
Douglas w/Brentwood	27	Apex	35
Farmington Woods	33	Carnage	144
Fox Road	18	Carroll	107
Fuquay Elementary	36	Centennial	33
Hilburn	19	Daniels (and Mt. Vernon)	73
Holly Springs	45	Davis Drive Middle	33
Jeffrey's Grove w/Leadmine Rd, Lynn Rd, Leesville	85	Dillard Middle	94
Joyner	30	East Cary (and Mt. Vernon)	75
Kingswood	3	East Garner	86
Knightdale	61	East Millbrook	102
Lacy	55	East Wake	132
Lincoln Heights	29	Fuquay-Varina	121
Lockhart	22	Leesville (and Redirection)	13
Middle Creek	31	Ligon	45
Millbrook	32	Longview	6
North Ridge	8	Martin Middle	130
Northwoods	15	North Garner	170
Olive Chapel w/Salem, Baucom & Davis Dr.	44	Wakefield Middle	40
Partnership w/Combs	19	West Cary	65
Penny Road	35	West Lake Middle	5
Pleasant Union	21	West Millbrook (and Milburn Students)	67
Poe	16	WF- Rolesville	105
Powell w/ Washington, Wiley & Hunter	78	Zebulon	140
Rand Road	29		
Reedy Creek (4th and 5th grades)	27		
Rolesville	38	**NOTE: # of students totals to more than**	
Root	18	**2,043 because this chart also includes**	
Swift Creek w/ Dillard & Yates Mill	96	**students who attended only on testing**	
Underwood	24	**days.**	
Vance	31		
Vandora Springs w/ Creech Rd, Smith & Fuller	87		
Wake Forest	36		
Wakefield w/ Wildwood	45		

WCPSS Summer Academy

The Summer Academy for WCPSS students was conducted during the month of June. Schools were given the responsibility of identifying Level I and II students who would be required to attend, for designing the instructional program for these students, for recruiting teachers to serve in the Summer Academy, and for actually scheduling the attendance days. Some of the elementary schools chose to consolidate their efforts, with one school in a cluster serving as the host site, and the other cooperating schools sending students and teachers to this consolidated site. This was seen as a more efficient way of providing summer opportunities, especially among schools with a relatively small number of students. Other schools, however, preferred to implement their own programs, believing that students would do better on campuses and with teachers whom they already knew. At the middle school level, each school implemented its own program. It was also decided that any student in Grades 3-8 who qualified by reason of test scores could participate, even though the State Board's policy only requires additional instructional for students in the Gateway grades of 3, 5, and 8. This ensured that local standards were implemented in the same way across grade levels.

WCPSS eliminated summer school in 1998, based on data that suggested there were more effective ways to address students' needs. The Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) has been the primary vehicle through which efforts to remediate students have been deployed. Many educators were hopeful that by placing remediation activities within the regular school calendar, students would not get so far behind before efforts were made to provide assistance. Similarly, year round schools use the intersession to provide catch up opportunities for students, rather than waiting for the end of the year. The immediate impetus for the Summer Academy was, of course, the new policy of the State Board of Education concerning promotion. Initial planning for the Summer Academy was carried out by staff of the WCPSS Office of Extended Learning Programs, which initially saw the Summer Academy as a continuation of other extra learning opportunities that were being offered to WCPSS students.

While the intention was always to turn operational authority over to the schools, the Central Office staff needed to begin some preliminary work to get the Summer Academies off the ground. Student selection criteria, procedures for re-testing students, ordering of some instructional materials, identification of teachers to staff the Summer Academies, and identifying administrators who would be responsible for the Summer Academies were all tasks that needed to be accomplished in advance. Initially, Summer Academies were planned to serve in excess of 10,000 eligible students in Grades 3-8. In all, more than 42,694 students in Grades 3-8 took End of Grade tests (EOG). Of these, 36,336 passed the EOG on the regular EOG testing that students took three weeks before the end of school. About 15% of students (6,385) scored at Level I or II on at least one EOG test, which was lower that the 10,000 originally expected. (The State had a problem with inflated math test scores, while local programs also resulted in improved achievement for many students.) Students still scoring at Level I or II were eligible to take a second EOG, in an effort to raise their scores. About 34% of these students were successful (2,043). In all, 3,043 students attended Summer Academy. This was roughly 70% of those eligible.

More than 400 teachers were hired to teach in the Summer Academies. Salaries for teachers accounted for the largest single expenditure of Summer Academy funds: $872, 668. In addition, Summer Academies were staffed by coordinators and members of External Review Committees who examined students' work and made recommendations about promotions to principals. These staff members were supplemented by testing proctors. These persons were necessary because of the relatively large number of students who were tested at the end of the Summer Academy with modifications that necessitated the students being tested in separate, smaller groups. Cost for salaries for all these additional staff members totaled $136,306. Fringe benefits for total salaries equaled $144,037. In all, slightly over $1,153,000 was expended for personnel costs in the Summer Academies. This was in addition to almost $82,600 spent for instructional supplies and materials and $232,445 for transportation. The total cost, then, of Summer Academy was $1,468,038. Thus, the per pupil expenditure for Summer Academy was just over $482.

Outcomes of the Summer Academy

Most of the students who attended the Summer Academy still scored below Level III on the tests administered at the end of the program. Indeed, only 29% of students who received a Level I or II score on the first, regular administration were able to earn a passing score at the end of Summer Academy. Compare this with 34% of students who were able to earn a passing score on the first re-test (and, consequently, were not required to go to Summer Academy) or with the 25% of students who should have – but did not – attend Summer Academy, but passed the EOG at the end of the Academy. Looked at in this way, if we consider the students who attended Summer Academy as the "experimental group" (those who received the treatment) only 4% more passed than was true for the "controls," those who did not receive the intervention but were eligible. (Please note that the "controls" may have differed in various ways from the Summer Academy students.) While this result is consistent with, but a bit lower than, published reports of summer school outcomes for other districts in North Carolina (e.g., Johnston County and Durham County both report about one-third of students are successful at the end of their summer schools), it is reasonable to ask why the success rate in WCPSS was so low.

In order to shed light on this issue, input from program administrators, Summer Academy teachers, and from all elementary and middle school principals was collected. (A compilation and summary of principals' responses to the questionnaire are presented in Appendix 1.) Several factors appeared to influence the outcomes:

1. The Summer Academy was relatively short. Although the Academy ran for about 15 days, a portion of this time was not available for instruction. Most sites used three days, for example, in testing students. In addition, there were two days of teacher planning time, usually before students came to the Academy. In terms of instructional days, the number of available days was no more than 12 and as few as 9 at many sites. Moreover, the day itself was shorter than during the regular school year.

2. The students in the Summer Academy often came with significant deficits in learning. Over half of students originally scoring in Level I-II as of Fall 2000 had successfully moved up to Level III or IV performance on the regular EOG or first re-test and were not invited to Summer Academy. Many of the Summer Academy students were

actually working several years below grade level. A Level I student in Grade 7 or 8, for example, might have received a test score of 141. This is the minimum score for grade level reading in Grade 3. Expecting these students to overcome such large deficiencies in just a few weeks may not be reasonable. In addition, many students had below grade level scores in both reading and mathematics, meaning that they would be receiving instruction in two curricular areas.

3. Some of the Summer Academy students were participants in Exceptional Children's programs and the Academy site was not always staffed with EC teachers. EC students who took the regular EOG (rather than alternative forms of the tests) and who scored at Level I or II became candidates for Summer Academy. Most Summer Academy sites did not have EC teachers available to work with these students. The teachers with whom we spoke did not suggest that this was a major barrier in teaching students. However, some Summer Acdemy students, identified as Behaviorally/ Emotionally Disturbed, had been in self-contained classes during the regular school year. For these students, the adjustment to a regular classroom—even a regular summer classroom—created difficulties for them and, sometimes, for other students in the Summer Academy.

The fact that many EC students participated in Summer Academy created another challenge for the staff. State testing regulations require that proctors be used in every case where students are being tested. Many EC students have testing modifications (e.g., test in a separate setting, read the test aloud) that require that they be tested outside the regular classroom often one at a time, in practice. This increased the need for test administrators and proctors. Given the small Summer Academy staff at each school, these requirements created barriers that the staff could not overcome without hiring additional testing proctors. Initially, this cost had not been foreseen, but more importantly, time was spent trying to recruit testing proctors.

4. The expressed goal of the Summer Academy may be unrealistic. In many ways, this concern combines aspects of several others. Students and teachers worked hard in the Summer Academy program, yet, a relatively small percentage of students achieved the goal of raising their test scores to Level III. Given the students who attended the Summer Academy, this is not surprising. Many of these students are among the most academically needy in the school system. It is unlikely that such students could have raised their scores to Level III in a short time. Because the End of Grade tests were the only officially acknowledged measure of success, many students did not succeed, but may have made progress not discernable on the EOG pass rates. Unfortunately, resources for this evaluation did not allow additional analyses using EOG scale scores or alternative measures.

5. Some of the Summer Academy teachers were only minimally prepared to teach the curriculum they were assigned yet more prepared teachers were often unwilling to teach. It is not clear how large a problem this created. However, it has been reported that some of the teachers who agreed to teach in the Summer Academy were not experienced in teaching the curriculum at the grade level to which they were assigned. The teachers willing to teach in the Summer Academy may also have been relatively new to teaching (i.e., in their first or second year). For example, one of the teachers we interviewed is a second grade teacher. She was assigned to teach third grade in Summer Academy. While the difference between her experience and her assignment wasn't large, it must be noted that she only had

one year of teaching experience. We heard of other cases in which teachers of dance, music, and foreign language were hired to teach in the Summer Academy. While these may have been very skilled teachers in their field, the necessary adjustment to a new curriculum probably took a toll on the effectiveness of these teachers.

In the early recruitment efforts, it was announced that Summer Academy teachers would be paid a fixed stipend. As it turned out, this advertised stipend was less than the rate many experienced teachers eventually were paid, based on their certified salary rating. Consequently, there may have been less incentive for these more experienced teachers to apply to work in the Summer Academy. As it turned out, Summer Academy teachers were paid at their regular certificate rate. Many experienced teachers also preferred not to teach in the Summer Academy, but rather to take their vacation time. Many newer teachers were attracted to the Summer Academy because they earn lower salaries to begin with. In any case, many of the teachers who could normally be counted on to meet the special challenges of working with low-achieving students did not teach in the Summer Academy. This undoubtedly had an impact on student achievement.

6. There was a shortage of highly skilled, well-qualified teachers interested in teaching in the Summer Academy. This is not intended to be disrespectful of teachers who did teach in Summer Academy. Certainly some of the teachers in the Summer Academy accepted what was a difficult challenge and did a good job with it. Nevertheless, it is true that in many schools, there were not enough applicants for Summer Academy positions to allow program managers to select from among several candidates. In consequence, many of the teachers hired were less experienced or did not hold certification in the grades/subjects that were being taught. It is not reasonable to expect any teacher to be able to pick up a curriculum with which she/he is unfamiliar and to be as effective as is a teacher who has previously taught that curriculum.

In summary, WCPSS has offered summer learning opportunities to students largely in response to the State Board of Education's Promotion/Intervention Policy requirement. The Summer Academy was conducted for students who had not attained Level III or higher scores on EOG tests. The instructional period in the Summer Academy was quite brief and was further reduced by the need to test students to determine whether they had attained grade-level proficiency. Unfortunately, the vast majority of students who had not passed the EOG at the end of the regular school year were not successful either on the first re-test or at the end of the Summer Academy.

There was some concern expressed by principals that the Summer Academy had been intended as a compulsory activity for designated students, but that, in fact, about 30 percent of such students did not attend. Anecdotal evidence suggests that, at least in part, this resulted from parents' preferences to enroll their children in summer programs offered at private tutoring agencies, or because children did not spend their summer in Wake County, perhaps as the result of a custody arrangement with a distant parent. Some of these students did participate in the EOG testing at the end of Summer Academy and they were only slightly less likely to pass. Thus, for many students, the Summer Academy does not appear to have been particularly effective at increasing the percentage of students passing the test. Importantly, for other students, the requirement that they attend Summer Academy does not

seem to have been meaningful. That is, they didn't attend, some still passed the test, and they were subsequently promoted to the next grade.

While staff of the Summer Academy appeared to be satisfied with the instructional materials that were available and felt that their work was important, there was a recognition that, in at least some cases, EC students presented challenges with which teachers were not prepared to cope. The need for additional assistance from EC staff was mentioned by both teachers and principals.

Based on the examination of other districts' summer programs, the outcomes of the Wake County Summer Academy, and interviews with teachers and principals, the following recommendations are presented for consideration by district decision-makers.

Recommendations

1. Decide whether the Summer Academy is a strategy WCPSS wants to use to help students attain grade-level achievement. The policy of the State Board identifies summer school as one of a range of strategies that may be used as part of the promotion policy. Summer school is not mandated. Therefore, some consideration of whether Summer Academy should be offered or required seems reasonable. While the vast majority of students in the district are successful during the regular school year, there are some students who need more time to learn or who need more support while learning.

The menu of intervention strategies might also include tutoring, before-and after-school programs, and other ways to help students maintain or improve their performance. Such support could include previewing important concepts and skills that are going to be introduced in the immediate future. One characteristic of slower learners is that they often need more explanation and more opportunities to try out new skills. A prevention program could provide some of that needed additional time and explanation. Without such assistance, the learner struggles to keep up with the class, often slipping farther and farther behind until the deficiency of learning is large enough to get some attention. It would probably be better for all concerned if support were offered on a continuous basis. This leads to a second recommendation.

2. Consider the entire range of remedial activities currently being conducted in both year-round and regular calendar schools. It was mentioned by several principals that students in year round schools cannot participate in the Summer Academy programs. Moreover, the use of the intersessions as a focused learning opportunity may be a more efficient use of resources than delaying remediation until after the end of the regular year. In any case, the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) appears to be well-established and may be a more productive strategy for remediating and preventing school failure. Concentrating the resources of energy and funding in the Accelerated Learning Programs may be a better option than maintaining a separate summer program.

3. If a summer program *is* going to be offered, it will be more effective if more time for instruction is allotted. In 2001, the Summer Academy program ran for a very short time and this time was not all available for instruction. A specific number of days for instruction (perhaps 20) should be determined and teacher planning and student testing days should be

added to (rather than included in) that number of days. This will obviously have the effect of increasing the cost of summer programs, both for additional teacher salaries and for transportation. However, it seems clear that if the goal is to provide meaningful instructional interventions, a longer period must be allowed.

4. If a summer program is going to be offered, the goals for both the program and individual students should be re-defined. Currently, the goal of the Summer Academy is widely perceived as "getting students to grade-level" as measured by EOG tests. This is a result of the State Board of Education policy that provides up to two retest opportunities after remediation. Thus, students are only successful if they pass the tests and are promoted. For many students, this is simply unrealistic. This is not to say that these students should necessarily be retained in grade. Indeed, many students who start out below grade level in Grade 3 or Grade 6 manage to catch up by the time they are in Grade 5 or 8. For other students, however, the deficiencies are so great that even an additional 20 days may not be sufficient to move them to grade level.

Related to this issue is the question of measurement. The EOG tests are probably not sensitive enough to measure change that might occur during the summer program. In order to measure growth, some other test or measurement should be considered. Such a test would demonstrate what has been learned by the student. In this way, achievable goals can be established and progress toward those goals can be measured. This need for better measures may become even more important in the future when it can be anticipated that more EC and Level I students will be concentrated in the summer programs. Nevertheless, this type of testing would add more to the costs of the program in comparison to the use of State tests.

5. If the Summer Academy is to be continued, more consideration needs to be given to which students might be strongly urged or required to attend. For example, are students who are closer to the cut-off score for Level III more likely to make the progress they need to "get to grade level"? Who is likely to benefit? Should Summer Academy be required or merely encouraged, and for whom?

6. Actively recruit the very best teachers to work with at-risk students, whether in the context of Summer Academy or other remediation programs. Finally, there is no substitute for an excellent teacher. Students who are most needy academically will benefit from working with excellent teachers. As currently structured, there is little incentive for such teachers to accept positions in the Summer Academy. They receive only their regular daily rate of pay, they give up much needed time off the job, and they receive little recognition for their efforts. A well-designed package of incentives might successfully attract the best teachers. Such incentives might include enriched compensation (e.g., certificate rate plus 20%), letters of acknowledgment from the Superintendent placed in the teacher's personnel file, the opportunity for additional staff development or conference attendance opportunities. Such a menu of incentives will be costly. However, the value that such teachers will bring to the program of remedial activities will probably repay such costs in terms of learning outcomes.

Appendix 1:

Compilation and Summary of Principals' Responses to Questions about Summer Academy

Questions/Issues for Discussion

1. ***What should be the instructional emphasis: remediation, problem-solving, enrichment, content areas, test-taking skills, reading comprehension?***

- Problem-solving/reading comprehension. Staff development should have been offered to teachers.
- More remediation between end of school (test 1) and re-test 2.
- Need at least 3 days of remediation between test and first re-test. Testing taking skills, reading comprehension, problem-solving, remediation (all underlined in question)
- Problem-solving, enrichment, test-taking skills
- Problem-solving, reading comprehension, remediation (circled in question)
- Basic skills remediation, direct instruction
- Reading comprehension; problem solving
- Reading comprehension; problem solving
- Problem-solving, reading comprehension, remediation (circled in question)
- Problem-solving/reading comprehension (highlighted in text)
- Reading comprehension: before, during, after skills; math: thinking process and problem solving
- Teach reading; get the student off the continuum
- Reading comprehension
- Reading (decoding, fluency, comprehension skills), math (problem-solving skills). Not test taking. We do this throughout the year.
- Test-taking skills
- Reading comprehension; problem solving (circled in question)
- Reading comprehension; problem solving (circled in question)
- Reading comprehension; problem solving (circled in question)
- problem solving, test taking skills, reading comprehension (circled in question)
- Problem-solving, reading comprehension, (circled in question)
- Remediation for Level I and low II. Reading comprehension. Level 1: they need to learn to read
- Depends on amount of time. If 4 weeks, then reading comprehension and problem solving
- Test taking, comprehension and problem solving
- Differentiate instruction based on individual student need: not one lesson for all (group by objective need)
- Remediation (Are these Spec Ed students?) We need Level II students disaggregated data.
- Reading comprehension; problem solving, enrichment (circled in question)

Middle Schools:

- focus on content
- problem solving and critical thinking
- if it (SA) is for passing EOG, test-taking skills

- reading comprehension; test-taking skills

Summary: It appears that the majority of respondents feel that the instructional focus for Summer Academy should be on reading comprehension and problem-solving skills. While some principals specifically responded NOT test-taking skills, others want this included. In a few cases, respondents urged differentiation based on demonstrated, specific, individual needs.

2. ***How long should Summer Academy be? Consider teachers' concerns, student results, etc.***

- 20 days
- 20 days. This year, students only had 9 days
- 20 days. When testing is taken out, children only had 9 days of remediation, which isn't much.
- 20 days
- At least 30 days
- 20 days of instruction
- Modified calendar for all schools: intersession/ ALP
- 4 weeks
- 4 weeks (Could impact recruitment? Same for $. Some motivated and committed.
- An extra month during the school year
- Length should depend on student need
- Go to a modified calendar, to be able to remediate before the student gets so far behind
- 3 weeks instruction; 2 days planning; 2 days testing
- This was a critical weakness in SA It should be a minimum of 20 instructional days, plus 3 days for testing and 2 additional workdays, for a total of 25 (minimum)
- Ineffective. Discontinue. Use classroom differentiation
- Current 9 days instruction, 3 days testing.
- On-going throughout the summer
- 9 days of instruction and 3 days of testing are inadequate to make a difference as shown b test results
- Should be an option for entire summer for all kids who may backslide (level I and II)
- 20 plus days
- 4 weeks
- Not at all w/short. 10 days by the time you test. More than 20 days
- Not have Summer Academy at all

Middle Schools

- increase to 22 days (2 for testing plus 3 days for teacher prep)
- 20 days for direct instruction
- 20 days minimum. Student days. 20 plus teacher planning days and teacher incentive (salary increase)

Summary: The majority of respondents indicated that 20 instructional days may be adequate. The important point seems to be that these should be instructional days, with planning and testing outside this 20-day window. In some cases, respondents used this opportunity to push for an extended year/modified calendar approach.

3. ***Do we need to keep Summer Academy "compulsory"?***

- Yes
- Yes
- Absolutely!
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes, if continued, especially for re-test 1.
- Yes
- Yes due to accountability and the law
- Yes
- Yes for below grade level
- If the promotion policy is compulsory, then remediation should be as well.
- No
- On-going throughout the summer
- On condition: criteria needs to be revamped.
- based on school team recommendation
- No, should not have at all; give resources for during school
- No, as an option
- Yes. The ones who need to be there may not if not compulsory
- Yes
- Yes. Special Programs students?
- Yes or retain or notarized documentation of tutoring
- Yes
- No, do away with Summer Academy

Middle Schools

- Some parameters: with principal flexibility; waive students based on individual needs
- Yes

Summary: Most respondents believe that Summer Academy should be compulsory. In some cases, their responses were conditional: if the promotion policy is compulsory, unless proof of alternative tutoring is presented. In a few cases, respondents thought that Summer Academy shouldn't be compulsory or that this decision should be made based on a school team recommendation.

4. ***How do we recruit the best teachers for Summer Academy/Intersession?***

- Offer 11 month contracts

- Offer 11/12 month contracts
- Offer a 12 month contract up front to ensure qualified staff
- Offer 11 month contract
- Money, extra incentives to get most effective teachers
- Offer 11/12 month contracts
- Incentive, monetary—have to give up other opportunities
- More money. Establish criteria for qualified remediation teachers
- Increase pay with principal recommendation on competence smaller classes
- Money alone won't do it.
- Make decisions on when earlier for recruiting purposes. Reduce class size.
- It is possible with incentives that the County would end up paying the least effective teachers greater amounts of money.
- Bonuses; free membership to gyms
- Pay better
- Incentive pay is a good thing; Perhaps 11 month pay for those staff who want to teacher Summer Academy
- More money
- Pay double. Very difficult to recruit staff. Staffings very difficult.
- Money and meet criteria of excellent teaching
- Money. Criteria/rubrics for excellent teaching
- Good pay

Middle Schools

- Increase salary (high schools pay better)
- provide paid planning time
- pat at 100% not 75%
- system recognition (citation to personnel file from Superintendent)
- Regular salary rate in areas of certification
- Additional ABCs bonus if Summer Academy students pass EOG
- Child care provided for Summer Academy teachers

Summary: The majority of respondents suggest two related steps. More money should be provided (perhaps in the form of an 11 month contract) and that should be tied to some process for identifying highly qualified, effective teachers. In a few cases, the specific incentive suggested went beyond an additional month of employment and, in one case, we are reminded that money alone may be insufficient.

5. ***What additional support do Summer Academy/Intersession teachers need for meeting the needs of Special Education students?***

- Hire Special Ed teachers to work with these students
- Smaller class size and special education teachers
- EC staff to help with modifications; lower class size for summer academy
- Staff development; human and material resources; smaller student/teacher ratio
- Training and Special Ed teachers on 11 month contracts to serve self-contained students

- IEP understanding; strategies used during school; testing accommodations; smaller class size, central control on curriculum that uses best practice
- Special education teachers; smaller class size
- Provide additional support; resource model
- Less than 10 students
- Special Education students are best served by teachers trained in Spec Ed. Smaller groups of children.
- Not only Summer Academy. ALL teachers need strategy support for dealing with the variety of exceptionalities: LD, EMD,BED, autism
- Additional certification in reading, Staff development in Math
- Perhaps a resource teacher
- Have more input from their spec ed teacher in writing the summer instructional program for their students
- Need TAs and help with modifications for testing. Spec Ed regulations I place or do not include (who do we send)
- Trained specialists for self-contained children (special needs)
- Yes, Spec Ed teachers need 11 month contract

Middle Schools

- Help with testing modification. Very difficult to manage a "Spec Ed" summer school to follow IEP and reading instruction
- Small classes
- Special Education teachers
- Increase technology

Summary: The sense of the group appears to be that there is a need for specially trained Special Education teachers to work with these students. Other suggestions included reducing class sizes and involvement of other staff with specific tasks (e.g., help with implementing modified testing), and assistance from the Special Education teacher in writing a summer instructional plan for the student.

6. ***Would Level I students be better served by knowing that their school year will be 195 days? Would teachers be better served by knowing that there was an option for an extended contract if they work with Level I students?***

- No to first question. Probably to second.
- No to first question. Yes. Tie in up front(?)
- No!
- Yes and the extended contract is great
- Yes and yes
- Probably. Need to look at scale score growth
- Should be 205 days. Move system to modified calendar of 11 months. Yes, but there should be specific rigorous qualifications for those teachers.
- Yes! Start in K-2, not just 3, 4, 5
- Yes with modified calendar
- Yes

- Target only Level I's and do as much one-on-one instruction as possible (to target specific skills not mastered).
- No. This sets up expectation of failure. Grouping students at school?
- Or more. Yes
- Yes! This is good.
- Both seem like effective models
- 11 months salary. Children go 11 months if did not pass OR modified calendar for everyone and compulsory intersession instruction for all Level 1 and II children.
- Yes. Contract for an extra month 11 month school year (full day)
- ll months employment for teachers
- Yes

Middle School

- Might be! Explore this!
- Yes. Yes, would be easier to attract

Summary: There was a division of opinion about the first question: should Level I students be alert to the fact that the district/school would provide an extended year for them? However, there was substantial agreement that teachers serving on an 11-month contract would be an asses. Other suggestions included providing more support for Level I students during the regular school year.

7. ***How do you think we can make Summer Academy more effective?***

- Extend the number of days for Summer Academy
- Training for teachers; additional pay for staff; longer time for students (more days)
- Find out which sites were more effective and what they did.
- More days
- More days, highly qualified teachers
- More days
- Do it during intersessions
- Teachers of own kids
- Increase pay
- Provide more direction in curriculum
- Intersession on modified calendar
- One-on-one tutorial might be more effective
- If still have, testing days need to be outside of the 15 days.
- Offer 6-9 weeks, reading, writing, math classes
- Do my own reviews ; do my own summer school. I know that this was an option, but transportation pushed clustering schools.
- Use money for tutors, challenge money. Leap frog math/Sylvan formula 1 to 5 ratio.
- Don't do it

Middle School

- Please develop a curriculum that can be consistent across grades and across the system. Everyone's inventing their own wheels.
- Possibly run Summer Academy like the Project Achieve schools. Insert some time for socializing (art, drama, dance)

Summary: By far, the largest number of suggestions had to do with providing more time for Summer Academy and ensuring that highly qualified, highly skilled teachers were available to teach. There were some requests for more direction in curriculum, more independence in planning the summer program, and additional funds for tasks associated with Summer Academy.

8. ***What might some alternatives to Summer Academy be?***
   - Keep it.
   - More instructional materials, Should keep Summer Academy
   - Modified school year
   - Modified calendar
   - modified calendar; build time into year
   - Modified calendar
   - Modified calendar; extended year for teachers
   - Start times for school early. This way remediation could start after school
   - Assign them to YR schools with remediation during off times
   - Extend year
   - Let the modified calendar become the traditional calendar
   - Technology driven, extended school year; reduce class size during the year. Alternatives for late start schools. They are dead in PM. Modify calendar for remediation during breaks
   - Or smaller class size and additional resource funds to schools to use as needed (people)
   - Use the money to lower class size during the school year. Focused daily help for Level I and II students.
   - 11 months of school for Level I and II students
   - Modified calendar
   - Intersessions, modified calendar
   - ll month calendar for Level I & II students

   Middle Schools
   - Modified schedule
   - Students would have intersessions instead of summer anything
   - Give schools the resources to use during the school year. Do not have summer academy. We want to give students help during the year and go to a modified calendar.

Summary: Taken all together, the respondents favored a modified school calendar that would build in additional time for remediation services either at the end of the regular year and/or with services during the current year. In some cases, the late start time for some schools was mentioned as inhibiting higher levels of achievement, provision of additional support services for students.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- Use ALP and Summer Academy money to reduce class size
- Full time IRT to be a true instructional leader
- Employ literacy and math teachers in grades 3-5 for high 2's and throughout the year.

COMMENTS ON YEAR ROUND:

- Need intersession allotment by early June
- Need data earlier
- Need allotment that will ensure at minimum one teacher per track
- More flexibility with IM positions

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